

A REPORT

OUTLOOK CONFERENCE IN RELATION TO 4-H CLUB WORK\*

The Outlook Conference clearly indicated that many economic and social forces are at work that have a definite relationship to the 4-H Club members and other young people who could be enrolled under the 4-H Club banner. The indications are that these forces may -

1. Influence the kind of projects and activities that they should engage in as 4-H Club members.
2. Affect the kind of production, marketing, and homemaking problems that their families will have to face and deal with.
3. Tend to mold the kind of economic and political society in which they as adults will live.
4. Affect the general form and direction of the whole 4-H Club program, if club work continues to address itself to leadership and citizenship development of youth through programs geared to the solving of underlying problems affecting farm and family life.

The extent of these influences will vary greatly by States and regions. In fact, such influences will be distinctly different from farm to farm and from member to member.

The Committee therefore recommends that it would be desirable -

1. For State 4-H Club staff members to plan an early conference with the members of the economic (farm and home-management) staffs and production specialists. The purpose would be to ascertain the more important basic problems in farming and homemaking and the trends that will influence agricultural and public policy in the respective States, particularly in relation to their effect on young people.
2. To determine the shift of emphasis needed in the 4-H Club program in the State from a short-time as well as a long-time point of view.
3. To discover methods of teaching that are consistent with the interests and needs of the 4-H Club age group (10 to 20 years old) and young farmers and homemaking groups (20 to 30 years old) including

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\* Implications of the future economic trends in relation to 4-H Club work as gleaned by a committee of State 4-H Club leaders and Federal 4-H Extension staff workers attending the 22d Annual Agricultural Outlook Conference, November 13 to 18, 1944, Washington, D. C.

techniques of planning in the communities, type of organization needed, achievement devices, and incentives that are suitable.

The Committee feels that 4-H Club work can continue to make a large contribution to the war effort, and also provide for a fuller development of young people by helping them to understand the many economic and social forces at work affecting their own immediate and future welfare in keeping with 4-H Club objectives.

Examples of the more specific trends in each main category referred to on page 1 are as follows:

1. - Influence on kinds of projects and activities.

"We are going to need virtually all the food that will be available during 1945."

- - - J. P. Cavin, Associate Head, Division of Statistical and Historical Research, Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

"The food-production job for next year will be as important to the war and to the peace as it was in 1944. Some shifts in the pattern of production will be needed in line with changing demand situations, but the total needs will continue to be great. We must make certain that we have plenty for our allies and for relief needs. To allow a margin of safety in case of adverse weather, and to assure maintenance of our reserve stocks, we will need to plant about the same total acreage as in 1944. We cannot risk the possibility of a shortage. We are planning to have enough in total, with full consideration for all factors, and we know we can count on farmers and ranchers to meet the necessary goals."

- - - Marvin Jones, War Food Administrator

"Current civilian supplies of canned vegetables are sufficient to meet demand but noncivilian requirements from the 1944 pack are of such magnitude that civilians may have reduced supplies before the 1945 pack becomes available along the middle of the year."

- - - National Food Situation, October, 1944. Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Though total goals will vary from State to State, the following emphasis is being called for nationally:

Hogs. - Slight increase over 1944.

Beef. - Increase needed.

Milk production. - Slight increase over 1944.

Egg production. - Decrease of about 18 percent desirable.

Cotton. - Decrease; drastic reductions needed in post-war. Soon cotton States may wish to study situation carefully.



Fruit. - More needed.

Victory gardens. - Every farm should a large garden. Every non-farm family with sunny, fertile ground or community plot should have a garden. Because 4-H gardens are so closely related to food supply, health, and nutrition, as well as being a teaching device, gardens should be actively stressed.

Tomatoes. - Large "can-house" increase needed.

Lima beans. - Increase needed.

Wheat, rye, and rice. - Decrease asked for.

Farm labor. - Will continue "tight." Young people will be needed again.

Clothing. - Conservation and care continue to be the keynote. When new materials arrive, 4-H members should know how to select quality.

Food preservation. - Canning and freezing should be emphasized at high levels.

Home-grounds beautification. - Several years of neglect are beginning to show effect. Should we begin to reemphasize this work?

Health. - This is regarded as a primary need of all people, and should be stressed increasingly by all groups and agencies.

On the usual-sized projects it is evident that the effort to make possible for all youth participation in the food production and conservation program is still sound, as a matter of helping them feel that they have an important part in winning the war. The project or demonstration still remains as a sound teaching device - as a laboratory at home. The opportunity to help young people learn economical, efficient, and better ways of doing things is more important than ever. Young men and women with large projects involving large amounts of capital would benefit by having the facts on probable costs, prices, and margins available before deciding on the types and size of projects they may wish to undertake. We suggest also that the following approaches be carefully explored as new projects or activities:

(1) Work simplification.

Can we help more youth apply some of the many principles of work efficiency and labor-saving devices?

(2) Farm-family financial planning.

Can we encourage more parents to provide an opportunity for 4-H members to take their place in family planning work?

(3) Farm-management planning.

Can we help more 4-H members make a contribution to the whole farm operation, using good farm-management principles?

(4) Father and son partnerships.

Does not this field offer a particularly good opportunity for the 4-H age group from 15 to 21 years, as well as in the young farmer group 20 to 30 years old?

(5) Hay and permanent pasture work.

With a shift to more grassland farming, does this not offer a challenge to those 15 to 21 years old and to young farmer groups as demonstrators?

(6) Home industries as well as home recreation.

These will be important in the post-war period. Skill in making, conserving, and reclaiming furnishings to make homes comfortable and attractive also will be important.

The demonstration program continues to have an opportunity to gear in with real production and marketing problems, such as -

- (1) Culling flocks.
- (2) Preparation of nutritious meals, particularly consumption of dairy products.
- (3) Paint and repair of buildings.
- (4) Proper use and care of home appliances.
- (5) Demonstrations in the 8-point dairy program.
- (6) Care and repair of clothing.
- (7) Canning and freezing of fruits, meats, and vegetables.
- (8) Simplifying farm chores.
- (9) Using power to save manpower.
- (10) Safety in the home, and on the farm and highway.
- (11) Health topics.

Obviously, the young men and women best equipped to face the future will be those who: Have learned to work with others; have acquired basic habits of thrift and initiative; have been stimulated to find and use all the facts; use efficient and modern methods; and have learned to appreciate the import of world affairs on their own welfare. This implies a renewed emphasis on sound 4-H Club principles in connection with the solving of larger problems of the day and helping to prepare youth to meet the situations in which they will find themselves in the future.



2. - Production, marketing, and homemaking problems affecting the farm family.

"The year 1945 will be the fifth successive year war dominates American agriculture. Even with a European victory early next year, the demand for the food and fiber output of American farms will continue at a high level. Military food requirements in the Pacific will be greater than ever, over-all civilian demand is expected to continue above pre-war levels, and foreign relief and export needs may assume large proportions. This demand, together with Government price supports, means farmers will again be assured favorable prices for their 1945 output. But 4 years of record production have brought about record stocks of many agricultural commodities. In some cases, these stocks will exceed probable demand, in others demand will far exceed supply. And so, rather important production shifts are in prospect for 1945."

- - - Quoted from November 1944 issue of the Agricultural Situation, U. S. Department of Agriculture, B.A.E.

"With significant changes likely to occur in the effective supply and demand situation for certain agricultural commodities after V-E Day, the problem of maintaining support prices for agricultural commodities until 2 years after the war at the levels fixed by Congress may very well be a much more difficult task than the problem of maintaining maximum prices for these commodities at the levels specified by Congress. On the other hand, some agricultural commodities will undoubtedly continue to be in short supply for some time after V-E Day. With respect to these commodities, the problem of maintaining maximum prices will continue to confront us. These problems of price floor and price ceilings are closely related, and factors directly affecting one are of vital importance to the other."

- - - R. H. Shields, Solicitor, War Food Administration.

Many large issues facing the farm family may not materially affect the club member's project directly. However, many questions will be discussed around the family table to which youth can make an intelligent contribution. For example, the dairy farmer may be asking, What effect will a possible surplus of dried whole milk have on my market? The poultrymen may be exploring, What will be the market for dried eggs when the armed services curtail demands? The cotton grower may be wondering what will become of his market, in view of the nylon- and rayon-producing capacities available. The fruit and vegetable grower will be wondering what he should do about production, with dehydration curtailed, freezing plants not yet to capacity, and demand not likely to absorb all produce from expanded production capacity. Can young people lead the way to sound shifts in agriculture by demonstrating new crops and progressive cultural methods?

What shall we do about production goals? What will our net income be? What kind of farm machinery shall we buy? For what household equipment should our savings be expended? These are examples of hundreds of questions farmers and their families will be asking. Does this, then, lend itself to further rounding out of the club program by providing youth with the kind of information vital to their families' welfare? Experience has shown that the 15- to 21-year age-group is vitally interested in such questions. The young farmer



groups, like those above club age, are actively concerned. Family tension will be in evidence as anxiety for boys in service increases, as reconversion brings on temporary unemployment, as talks of peace pervade the family table. May not the older boy and girl help with adjustment problems if they have been given a feeling of security, or have shared in the confidence of the family plans? Would outlook subject matter, written with appeals for club members, be useful? Could special outlook discussion sessions be included in their year's program? Could representative young people be included in goals meetings?

Implied in the entire long-time outlook is the whole question of whether or not a young man should choose farming as a vocation. And if so, how best can he get started? Such questions as, What are the features of a good father-son partnership? or How can I choose a good farm to rent? are examples of real issues confronting the older 4-H age group. Just as important are the questions: What shall I do with my war savings? How can I improve our farm home? The air will be full of plans on rural housing. What can older 4-H boys and girls do in making building plans, learning building skills, refinishing and papering rooms?

### 3. - Kind of economic and political society of the future.

The Committee realizes that the shape of things to come cannot be predicted. Rural people have a large stake in that future. In a democracy a well-informed public is the fountainhead for State and National policies adopted. Youth, intelligently prepared to discuss the basic issues, can be a vital influence in maintaining government by the people.

Various meetings at the Outlook Conference indicate that basic questions of post-war policy need to be faced by young people as well as by adults. For instance, Should Government establish basic wage policies to assure maintenance of industrial income? Should production be based on minimum nutritional standards guaranteed for all people? Should crop insurance be continued and extended? Should jobs be guaranteed for all? What types of governmental control are needed? Can world peace be achieved without free trade? Should taxation be used as an instrument for economic control rather than a simple device for procuring revenue?

Furthermore, the world will be a smaller one after V-E Day. World problems will be real in every community. Older youth will want to feel a part of a large and important group doing significant things. The art of working and living with his neighbors will loom even more important than previously. What about the church, the civic organization, and youth's responsibility toward them as community institutions?

Since 4-H Club work has always accepted the challenge to build youth for the tomorrow, are there ways in which basic issues of public policy can be discussed with leaders of older members, and thus contribute to the further building of leadership? The Committee believes that such materials need to be factual and unbiased.

### 4. - General form and direction of 4-H work.

As already indicated, the Committee feels that the findings of the Outlook Conference are important in the further development of 4-H Club

programs. Clearly, shifts of emphasis in program content and program planning are constantly necessary. Furthermore, methods of organization and teaching need to be adjusted in varying degrees in different States if club work is to help youth deal with large farm and home problems in a realistic fashion.

For instance, will more self-determination of programs be needed locally? Will 4-H groups need to be organized more on a community basis, coeducationally, for the 15- to 21-year-olds? Should we redefine the "club project" as a teaching device as well as for a "basis for membership"? Are special types of letters, flyers, folders, and bulletins, called for? Will special kinds of leaders and sponsors be needed? What kind of leader training will fit the situation? What events will motivate thinking in these larger spheres?

Finally, the Committee heartily commends the Federal Extension Service for planning to prepare Guideposts for 4-H Club Leaders, which this year is to include economic implications by subject-matter groupings.

We further commend those responsible for inviting State Club leaders to attend the Outlook Conference.

We further recommend that this plan become an established policy, in order that those assigned to report to all State 4-H leaders may adequately plan and prepare for the responsibility such a privilege carries with it. We believe that both men and women representing different regions should be invited on a rotating basis.

Respectfully submitted:

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APPENDIX

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